

## [Mrs. Missouri Borders]

FOLKSTUFF - PERSONAL NARRATIVE

Range-lore

Ruby Mosley

San Angelo

RANGE-LORE

"I was born in the little town of Belton, Texas 84 years ago, it was a very little town then," relates Mrs. Missouri Borders:

"My father was not selfish but longed for plenty of range, as other old settlers did. He put the first works in [Comoncho?] then as people settled too close around he moved on out. We then established a little town that was called Dennis, which was named for himself, Mr. [L.?] D. Dennis. Which is known today as Cisco. We then moved to Grandburry Grandbury where father had an extensive range. As Little Miss Missouri I learned to ride. I was the oldest child C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 and took my position right by the side of my father when I was seven years of age, we started out for the range.

"Soon my daddy, my pal, was called to war, he only had time to say good-bye when he was called, we were left behind as most other families, in God ' s care. We were fortunate to have a grandfather and family a few miles away. Grandfather sent a buck slave to help feed and manage the stock. I could not stay from the barn and horses I had acquired the love and appreciation of the dumb animals, before my father was taken away. The old black buck would shuck corn to the tune of old hymns that he could sing and blubber so well with his large black lips. I can recall peeping my head with pigtails on either side, over

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the very top rail of the fence until the last ear was shucked. I just lived from one feeding time until the next, so that I could get outside with life. Indians were running wild and we were not allowed out of the little one room log cabin which had one door and one window until the old buck came to feed the livestock.

“My mother was a very brave women and proved it by her daily life. When my father had been away about three months a baby brother was born. My grandmother played the doctor's part very nicely. My father was in Louisiana at that time and was glad the addition was a boy. At the very first 3 chance he sent his welcomed son a creole pony and blanket.

“My father was educated and known as Dr. D. [B?]. Dennis, he was made a lieutenant during his service in the Civil War.

“A Yankee General was wounded, my father took him to his quarters and treated him, nevertheless death approached, and the general knew that be must die. He often heard my father speak of me and gave his Bible and ring to father to send to me.

“Home life was more disagreeable during that war than any other that I have lived through. Our food consisted of what we could raise at home, and sometime that was destroyed or taken. We had corn mush and milk for supper regardless of Sunday or company, always corn mush and milk. Our Sunday breakfast consisted of biscuit, butter and honey, the noonday meal was beef and some vegetable if there was one in season.

“One night while father was gone, we spent the night at my grandfather's, when we returned the next morning the Indiand had killed two of our calves and cooked them in our yard; the fire was still burning and fragments of the calves were scattered over the yard. We were so happy that we spent the night away and had escaped their deadly clutches.

“Soon the flags of peace moved and my father returned safe and whole, what a joyful reunion after the four years of absence. We were among the fortunate as we had escaped the 4 Indians at home and father was saved from afar. The evening and most of the night

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was spent reminiscing the events of four years. Father was happy to caress his son most 4 years old for the first time. Plans were made for the next morning. My father and mother were going to grandfather's to show him what a fine looking lieutenant his son made.

“Father and mother started out early on the war horse and little creole pony that father had sent to baby brother. As they started off father said that the Indians could easily catch them when riding the little creole. Mother thought of two cows that needed attention, soon they went to see about them, and while winding their way in and out, father saw sixteen mounted horses. He asked mother if his good friend Washbourne was still scouting with his men. He said, “Look that's Washbourne, we will ride slow and see him.' Mother insisted that they go on, it could be Indians. They kept their eyes on the riders and saw each of them get down and tighten up on their saddles, then made a two by two formation as a scouting crew would. They rode along in an ordinary pace to not arouse the suspicion of my parents. Indians were very clever and imitated the whites. As they rode nearer my parents recognized them as Indians, and ran for life. As the Indians rode in circles and gave their 5 war whoops, father fired into them just as long as his ammunition lasted. Father was knocked off of his horse and lanced through and through the upper part of the right side of his chest. Mother was knocked off of her horse and they tried to capture her but they were more interested in catching their horses and took in after them.

“Mother took father's gun down in a little ravine and reloaded it, she did not know that father was wounded until he turned sick.

“The horses ran home as fast as they could go, we children were out in the yard, the old negro was shucking corn and yelled, 'You chillun get in dat house, Injuns am comin',' we lost no time in getting inside, the negro crawled under the shucks. The Lord took care of us again; the Indians never stopped. They were only after the horses. During their chase after horses mother helped father to a vacant spot but where he stretched out deathly sick. He told mother he would die if he didn't get some water. The only thing mother could think of

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to carry water in was her shoes, so she went to the creek and returned with both of them full of water and father emptied both of them. He told mother that he felt better and she went up the creek as fast as she could for about two miles to father's parents. When she got there they were finishing a skirmish with the same Indians. Mother hid until the last Indian had gone. The family went with her to my father as soon as possible, wondering and hoping to find him alive. They placed him in a quilt and carried him home. They could get no doctor but finally found an old quack that removed the lance with a pocket knife and bullet mold, he then drew a silk handkerchief through his body; that procedure was repeated every day for a long time.

"The citizens went on a hunt for the Indians and found them in a hole of water. There were 14 braves and 2 squaws in the bunch. They were held there four days before enough citizens came to help capture them. Uncle John blew the bugle for more help and at that instance they fired and killed four of our men. Our men waited no longer and did not consider capturing but fired and killed the 16 Indians as soon as they could pull the trigger. Uncle John cut a dead squaw's finger off and took her ring, which he kept for a while but soon discarded it to try and forget the memories. One of the men took the scalps of the two squaws and presented them to my father. He kept them and the spike that was cut out of his chest until the [Lampasasa?] flood come and washed them away. Father was an invalid for twelve years after the fight.

"The Indians made an attack on a family that lived 7 near us, and killed and scalped the women and put the baby to her breast, burned the house, tore the feather beds open and stole the little girl. I went with my grandparents to see the horrible sight. The Indians killed and took the scalps of Uncle Luke Smith and his two sons.

"One time father went to Belton for supplies and was gone two weeks; we two families stayed together and lived on curd the entire time. We had no salt or any thing to season it.

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"We moved to [Lampasas?] when I was about 15 years old. The Indians came through and killed some horses in the yards of the old water mill and when they failed to get them out of the pen they shot them to death.

"I married Mr. Borders when I was 23 years of age and we moved to Coleman and lived there until the World War came on and we lost most of our holdings and my husband died. I then came to San Angelo where I have lived since.

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REFERENCE: Mrs. Missouri Border. San Angelo, Texas. Interviewed October 6, 1938.